THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • MONDAY • FEBRUARY 08, 2021 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 34 • LATE CITY EDITION

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FOREIGN PLOT BREWING TO DEFAME INDIAN TEA, SAYS MODI

The Prime Minister says international forces are trying to attack India's tea-based identity, but did not name anyone

RILED BY CHAI IN THUNBERG TOOLKIT?

During his poll campaign rally in the tea producing state's Dhekiajuli on Sunday, Modi was apparently referring to activist Greta Thunberg's controversial 'toolkit', wherein one of the action points was to 'disrupt yoga and chai image of India'. The other target perhaps was a Greenpeace study in 2014 that claimed Assam tea growers overused pesticides

CENTRE REACHING OUT TO FARMERS

- Assam's happiness and progress are its tea gardens. Who knows the taste of Assam tea better than me? That's why I always see the progress of tea workers with the progress of Assam, he said
- Reaching out to the tea workers, he said the Centre has alloted ₹1,000 crore for the sector in the budget to uplift their lot

₹584 crore

GIVEN TO 7.5 LAKH BY ASSAM GOVT UNDER A SCHEME FOR TEA WORKERS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

At least 10 dead, up to 150 missing in Himalayan glacier break

Five bridges washed away, 17 villages totally cut off after a portion of Nanda Devi glacier breaks off; flash floods destroy a couple of power plants in Uttarakhand

VINEET UPADHYAY @ Chamoli

A glacier break that swept into the Rishiganga and Dhauliganga rivers in Reni and Tapovan villages, 26 km from Joshimath in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, triggered a massive flood and claimed at least 10 lives on Sunday. The number of casualties can rise because nearly 125-150 labourers working at a power project in Tapovan-Reni are missing.

Disaster struck around 10 am. A total of 17 villages got totally cut off as five bridges were washed away. Residents of seven of these moved to safer places. People of the 10 other villages are being provided help, said officials. Damages were reported at Tapovan dam on Alaknanda river, while the 13.2 megawatt Rishiganga hydropower project was completely swept away. Around 176 workers were working on these projects.

Close to 250 personnel from the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, Indian Army and Indian Air Force joined the rescue work, said Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat. The state government has announced ₹4 lakh each for the families of the deceased. "All our efforts are focused on reaching people and providing relief. Our brave forces are doing their job and we have support from the whole nation. Essential items, medicines, choppers of Indian Army, Air Force and state government are on standby," the CM added.

The labourers missing are mostly from the state. Some are from Nepal and western UP. ITBP rescued 16 people trapped in a tunnel of a dam which is a part of the hydroproject.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Rawat and assured all help. CONTINUED ON: P9

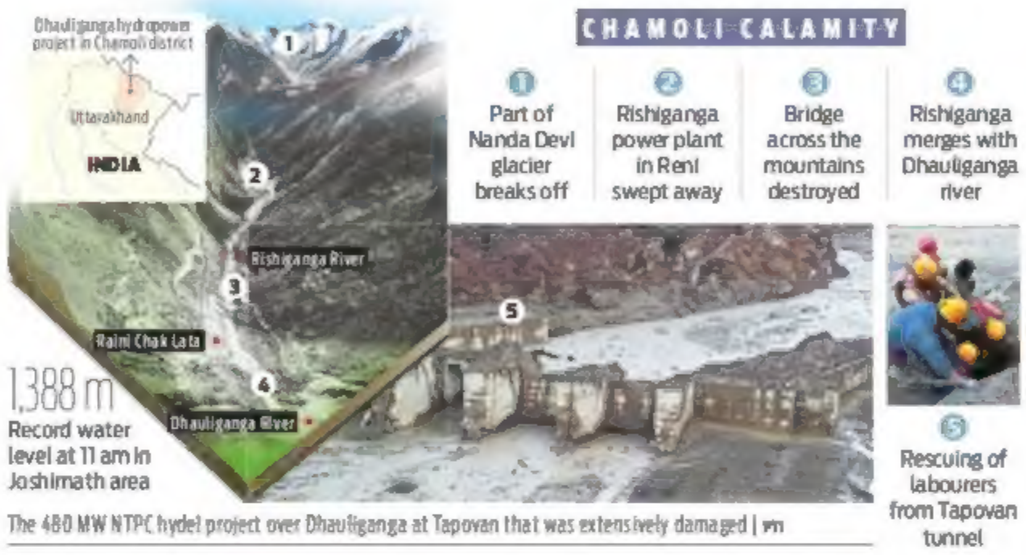
Major natural disasters

1991
6.8 quake in undivided UP in October 1991 killed over 760 people, thousands of houses destroyed

1998
Malpa village in Pithoragarh district destroyed in landslide; 255 people, including 55 Kailash pilgrims, killed

1999
6.8 quake hit Chamoli district killing over 100 people. Rudraprayag district, too, affected

2013
Cloudbursts in June 2013 in Uttarakhand caused massive floods and landslides. 5,700+ killed; over 3 lakh pilgrims trapped for weeks


CHAMOLI CALAMITY
Dhauliganga hydropower project in Chamoli district
Uttarakhand
INDIA
1 Part of Nanda Devi glacier breaks off
2 Rishiganga power plant in Reni swept away
3 Bridge across the mountains destroyed
4 Rishiganga merges with Dhauliganga river
Rishiganga River
Raini Chak Lata
Dhauliganga River
1,388 m
Record water level at 11 am in Joshimath area
5 Rescuing of labourers from Tapovan tunnel

The 480 MW NTPC hydel project over Dhauliganga at Tapovan that was extensively damaged | PTI

Scary roar out of nowhere from the hills

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Dehradun

AT Reni village that is at the epicentre of the tragedy, Sandeep Nautiyal was lazing around on a bright and sunny Sunday when he heard a big roar from the hills. He looked around and spotted the horrible avalanche menacingly approaching at least 5 km away.

His first instinct was to rush out of his house and alert fellow villagers to flee, shouting '*Bhago Bhago*'. "Suddenly we heard a mix of a roar and a slight tremor. We saw this huge wave coming down the mountains washing off everything in its way," said Nautiyal.

The village of 300-odd people located near the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve mostly has shepherds, farmers and workers. "Landslides during monsoon are common, but this avalanche in winter is shocking," said Shankar Rana, another resident. At least five locals are feared missing and 180 sheep and goat were swept away by the flash floods.

Chamoli disaster rings the global warming alarm bell

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Dehradun

IT was a glacial break alright, but the jury is still out on how and why it actually happened. However, the mismatch between the haste in commissioning projects in the ecologically-fragile zone and the need to fortify mitigation mechanism suggests it was a disaster waiting to happen. Experts blame it on the lessons not learnt by successive governments, given Uttarakhand's history of natural disasters.

A former glaciologist at Dehradun's Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, D P Dobhal, called for a detailed probe. "Lake formation must have happened, which breached today and caused the floods," Dobhal said, adding that heavy sediments in the floodwater indicate an avalanche or glacial debris could have triggered the burst. "It will take time to ascertain the reasons as had happened with the 2013 disaster in Kedarnath. After investigation it was confirmed to be a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF)," said Dobhal.

The possibility of the incident being GLOF has rung alarm bells among the glaciologists. Given that it occurred in winter, it would signal that global warming was a major contributing factor.

In 2014, a high-powered committee, constituted by the Supreme Court, led by Ravi Chopra, had recommended scrapping of 23 out of 24 hydel projects slated for construction above an altitude of 2,000 metres in the aftermath of the 2013 floods. "We submitted a report warning against constructing hydel projects at an altitude above 2,000 metres, noting various vulnerabilities which could result in a major disaster. Altitude above 2,000 metres is para glacial region, where heavy constructions should be avoided," he said. But the recommendation was not acted upon, said activist Aakash Vashishta. P9

EXPRESS READ

Centre eyes 1K routes under UDAN scheme

Raipur: Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Sunday said his ministry has set a target of operationalising 100 unserved and underserved airports and starting at least 1,000 air routes under UDAN. He also said privatisation is required in aviation.

Govt to work with RBI for bank privatisation

Mumbai: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said the government will work with RBI for execution of the bank privatisation plan announced in the Union Budget, which was presented last week.

India ranks third in most number of jabs

New Delhi: India has become the third top-most country in the world in terms of the number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday. Only the United States and the United Kingdom remain ahead of India.

WITH THIS ISSUE
THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST edex
34 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF edex (TABLOID), 4 OF CITY EXPRESS

ST status: Lakhs gather at Kuruba show of strength

Members of the Kuruba community arrive from different parts of the state in Bengaluru on Sunday, for the convention demanding ST status | ASHISH KRISHNA MP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a massive show of strength, lakhs of people belonging to the Kuruba community from across the state gathered in Bengaluru on Sunday, demanding the Scheduled Tribe tag for the community.

The convention at the Bengaluru International Exhibition Centre near Nelamangala was the culmination of a three-week-long 340-km padayatra that started in January at Kaginele of Haveri under the leadership of Kaginele Kanaka Guru Peetha Seer Sri Niranjananandapuri.

Seers and politicians from the community across party lines stood hand-in-hand on the dais in a show of solidarity in their demand for the ST status. However, the tallest Kuruba leader, Congress Legislature Party chief Siddaramaiah, was conspicuous by his absence.

"We are not asking for a new addition to the ST status list. Kurubas were classified as ST even before Independence. We are merely demanding restoration of that tag. A majority from the community still live in hamlets, grasslands herding sheep. While Kadu Kuruba and Jenu Kurubas are considered as ST then why not all Kurubas? Gonda, Rajagondas and Kurubas are the same but Kurubas aren't given ST certificates," said HM Revanna, a senior Congress leader from the community. P4,7

Traffic out of gear

Despite traffic diversions made by the police, traffic snarls were reported on the highway as more vehicles showed up.

We are not asking for a new addition to the ST list. Kurubas were classified as ST even before Independence. We merely want the tag restored.

H M Revanna, Congress leader

It is painful to see that the person that this community sacrificed its body, soul and wealth to make the CM has not turned up.

A H Vishwanath, MLC, taking a dig at Siddaramaiah

K'TAKA PAID ₹15 CR TO VEERAPPAN FOR Dr RAJKUMAR'S RELEASE IN 2000: BOOK

M SABARI @ Salem

SANDALWOOD smuggler Veerappan had driven both the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka governments up the wall when he abducted Kannada matinee idol Dr Rajkumar and held him hostage for over hundred days.

Two decades later, a book written by a journalist who was part of the team that negotiated with the brigand claims that the Karnataka government had paid crores of rupees, ₹15.22 crore to be precise, as ransom, to secure a deal.

Dr Rajkumar was abducted from his farm house in Gajanur near Thalavadi in Tamil Nadu on the night of July 30, 2000. Rajkumar's relatives Govindaraj, Nakesh and his assistant Nagappa were also abducted. On behalf of the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka governments, a team led by Nakkheeran magazine editor, Gopal, was sent into the forest to negotiate with Veerappan. P Sivasubramaniyam, veteran journalist and author of the book, was part of the team. After several rounds of negotiations, which lasted 106 days, Veerappan released Rajkumar on November 13, 2000. Subsequently, it was widely speculated in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka that crores of rupees exchanged hands. But the Karnataka government and Rajkumar's family members called them rumours.

On Saturday, Sivasubramaniyam released a book 'Veerappan Vaazhnthathum Veezhnthathum (Life & Fall of Veerappan) - part two and three' which has created ripples in the political arena. The first part of the book was released last year. P7

I do not know of any such transaction. Neither have I met this person, nor was I asked any such thing. I have not given anything

Congress veteran Mallikarjun Kharge, who was then the Home Minister of Karnataka

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